

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 /078 W

-----029979 091602Z /43

R 091330Z SEP 77

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9433

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JERUSALEM 1442

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IS, JO, XF

SUBJECT: PRESENT MOOD OF WEST BANK

1. SUMMARY: PESSIMISM AT PROSPECTS FOR PEACE AND ACUTE CONCERN ABOUT THE INTENSIONS OF THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY PREVAIL THROUGHOUT THE WEST BANK. IN THE WAKE OF THE VANCE VISIT, US POLICY IS COMING UNDER INCREASING ATTACK ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF MAINTAINS A SOMEWHAT SURPRISING CREDIBILITY. THE PLO'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE FROM DAMASCUS HAS GENERALLY BEEN ACCEPTED AS APPROPRIATE. STILL, MANY LOOK FOR A POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATION WITH THE US, PERHAPS THROUGH A NEW SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. LOCAL ATTEMPTS AT AN ALTERNATIVE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP ARE DISMISSED BY MOST LEADING WEST BANKERS WITH SCORN AS ISRAELI JORDANIAN PLOTS. ALTHOUGH THE OLDER GENERATION IS ALMOST CATATONIC, POLITICAL SPARKS ARE EXPECTED FROM THE STUDENTS WHOM THE MILGOV IS ALREADY TAKING STEPS TO COUNTER.

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END SUMMARY.

2. AS RAMADAN AND THE SUMMER DRAW TO AN END AND THE SCHOOL YEAR AND THE UN DIPLOMATIC SEASON BEGIN, WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING SURVEY OF THE POLITICAL MOOD ON THE WEST BANK.

3. ATTITUDES TOWARD U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY.

IN THE WAKE OF THE VANCE VISIT, THE GLOOM AND PESSIMISM WHICH BEGAN WITH THE LIKUD VICTORY IN MAY HAS DEEPEENED INTO DESPAIR. THE EDITORIAL TONE OF JERUSALEM'S MODERATE DAILY AL QUDS, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY SARCASTIC WITH REFERENCES TO "CIRCLES OF EMPTY DISCUSSIONS." MEANWHILE, THE PRO-PLO DAILY AL FAJR CONTINUES ITS ATTACKS, MOST RECENTLY AGAINST THE DEPT.'S "LETTER TO A CONCERNED AMERICAN." EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTER UNDER THE HEADLINE "AMERICA COMMITTED TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY" UNFORTUNATELY DID NOT REFLECT THE BALANCE OF THE ORIGINAL, AT LEAST AS PUBLISHED IN THE JERUSALEM POST SEPT 4 (PLEASE PROVIDE COMPLETE OFFICIAL TEXT). AL FAJR PORTRAYS OUR PREFERENCE FOR WEST BANK LINKS WITH JORDAN AS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AND WITHDRAWAL IS REDUCED TO TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENTS DESIGNED TO CONVERT ISRAEL'S SECURITY BORDERS TO RECOGNIZED ONES. IN ITS EDITORIAL, AL FAJR SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZES U.S. POLICY FOR 1) SEEKING YET MORE TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE FROM PALESTINIANS. 2) PREJUDICING PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION BY IMPOSING LINKS WITH

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JORDAN AND 3) DEMANDING PLO ACQUIESCENCE TO 242 WITHOUT US RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. SURPRISINGLY, PRESIDENT CARTER HAS LARGELY BEEN IMMUNE TO PERSONAL ATTACKS IN THE PRESS, AND PRIVATELY MANY PALESTINIANS STILL CREDIT HIS GOOD FAITH AND HOPE THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO FORCE CONCESSIONS FROM THE ISRAELIS. THE MORE SOPHISTICATED POLITICAL OBSERVERS APPRECIATE DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS, BUT COMPLAIN--AS DID RECENTLY HIKMAT AL MASRI OF NABLUS--"THE ISRAELIS ARE NOW GOVERNING IN U.S." OR WONDER--AS DOES JOSEPH RIDDA, NABLUS UNRWA AREA OFFICER--WHETHER THERE ARE ANY LIMITS TO THE JEWISH LOBBY'S INFLUENCE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 JERUSALEM 1442

4. THE PLO OR A LOCAL ALTERNATE? POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE PLO REMAINS FIRM. EVEN RELATIVELY INDEPENDENT PERSONALITIES SUCH AS THE AL MASRI'S OF NABULUS, AZIZ SHIHEDEH OF RAMALLAH AND MAYOR FREIJ OF BETHELEHEM ARE UNWILLING TO JOIN ANY ALTERNATE GROUP. RAMALLAH LAWYER HUSSAYN SHIYUKHI IS DISMISSED WITH CONTEMPT AS AN ISRAELI-JORDANIAN STOOGE, BUT, SO FAR THE US IS NOT SEEN TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PLOT. GIVEN WHAT ARE SEEN AS DIM PROSPECTS FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, THE PLO'S REJECTION OF 242 IN DAMASCUS IS SEEN AS ONLY PRUDENT. WITH THE US APPARENTLY UNABLE TO DELIVER THE ISRAELIS, THE RADICALS ARE MORE COMFORTABLE THAN EVER IN PUSHING THE SOVIET OPTION. MODERATES, LIKE ZAFAR AL MASRI, DEPUTY MAYOR OF NABLUS, STILL SEE SOME GAIN IN A PLO-US RAPPROCHEMENT AND THE INEVITABLE ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE US AND ISRAEL WHICH THAT WOULD PROVOKE. A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION DEFINING PALESTINIAN RIGHTS IN A FORM ACCEPTABLE TO THE US IS SEEN AS A POSSIBLE AVENUE FOR PROGRESS. IN RECENT
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CONVERSATIONS BOTH TULKARM'S HANNUN AND NABLUS SHAKA ALSO SEEMED TO BE MORE MODERATE THAN THE PLO VIS-A-VIS 242. FEWER NOW COUNT ON A RE-CONVENING OF GENEVA, BUT THE UN ITSELF IS SEEN AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATE FORUM WITH A UN RESOLUTION SEEN AS A POSSIBLE INSTRUMENT FOR IMPOSING PEACE UPON THE ISRAELIS.

5. ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS ON WEST BANK.. THERE IS A GROWING SENSE OF FEAR THAT THE WEST BANK IS SLOWLY AND INEXORABLY CHANGING IN CHARACTER TO BECOME MORE AND MORE A PART OF ISRAEL. AFTER 10 YEARS OF OCCUPATION, THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE WEST BANK IF INCREASINGLY DOMINATED BY ISRAEL. ARAB CULTURAL LIFE HAS BEEN WITHERING, EFFORTS TO STEM THE TIDE OF PERVASIVE ISRAELI INFLUENCE HAVE BEEN ENFEEBLED, AND MANY OF THE WEST BANK'S YOUNGER GENERATION CONTINUE TO LEAVE. WITH THE ADVENT OF THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT, THE BEGIN HARD-LINE RHETORIC THAT "JUDEA AND SAMARIA" ARE A PART OF ISRAEL IS SO BOLD AND BLATANT AS TO BE INTIMIDATING TO MANY WEST BANKERS. HIS PUBLIC STIFF-ARMING OF THE PRESIDENT'S AND SECRETARY'S CRITICISM OF SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY AND THE U.S. UNWILLINGNESS TO PRESS THE ISSUE HAS GIVEN WEST BANKERS LITTLE HOPE THAT ISRAEL CAN BE RESTRAINED OR THAT PALESTINIANS WILL SOON BE MASTERS OF THEIR OWN FATE IN THE WEST BANK. SHARON'S SETTLEMENT PLANS AND THE "EQUAL SERVICE" PRONOUNCEMENT ADD FURTHER TO THE SENSE OF ISRAELI DOMINATION. SOME WEST BANKERS ARE REACTING IN FEAR AND DISCOURAGEMENT AND MAKING PLANS TO LEAVE WHILE OTHERS (FEWER IN NUMBER) ARE BECOMING MORE RADICALIZED AND CONSIDERING ACTION. ALTHOUGH WE ARE CONVINCED THAT WEST BANKERS, PERHAPS MOST AMONG ALL THE ARABS, ARE PREPARED NOT ONLY TO ACCEPT THE

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STATE OF ISRAEL BUT TO LIVE ALONGSHIDE AND HAVE RELATIONSHIP WITH IT, THE LIKUD LANGUAGE AND GUSH ACTIVISM, IF NOT RESTRAINED, WILL LIKELY LEAD TO INCREASING ARAB-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION AND VIOLENCE.

6. A VIOLENT AUTUMN AHEAD? ALTHOUGH DESPAIR HAS ENGENDERED PASIVITY AMONG THE OLDER GENERATION, IT IS YET UNKNOWN HOW THE STUDENTS WILL REACT. SCHOOLS WERE GENERALLY QUIET IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE LIKUD VICTORY, BUT THE HEAD OF THE BETHLEHEM STUDENT BODY RECENTLY TOLD CONGEN OFFICER THAT HE THOUGHT SOME DEMONSTRATIONS THIS YEAR ARE LIKELY. IF NOT AS PROLONGED AS IN 1975-1976, THE DEMONSTRATIONS WILL MARK, AT LEAST, OCCASIONS SUCH AS UN DEBATE OF THE PALESTINE PROBLEM OR BALFOUR DAY AND THEY WILL PROBABLY RESPOND TO PROVOCATIONS, E.G. NEW ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS. THE MILGOV HAS MOVED TO PREEMPT TROUBLE IN THE SCHOOLS BY DECREASING THE CONCENTRATION OF STUDENTS IN THE MAJOR TOWNS, DEMANDING LISTS OF STUDENTS AND BACKGROUND ON TEACHERS FOR INTELLIGENCE PURPOSES, DETAINING SOME ACTIVISTS, AND RELEVYING SOME OLD UNPAID FINES. BESIDES AVOIDING CASUAL DEMONSTRATIONS, THE MILGOV'S MAJOR TEST WILL BE KEEPING UNAVOIDABLE ONES FROM ESCALATING INTO SPIRALS OF VIOLENCE.

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Message Attributes

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Subject: PRESENT MOOD OF WEST BANK
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IS, JO, XF
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